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Californica

By

W. H. Mills

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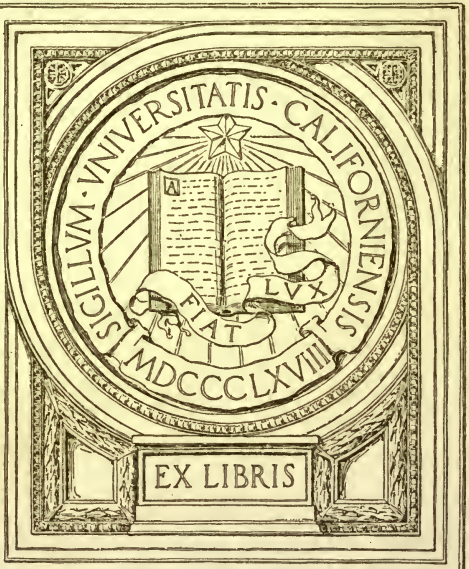

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Feb. 27. 1919.

CALIFORNICA

By

WILLIAM HATHORN MILLS

San Bernardino, California
BARNUM & FLAGG COMPANY
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The Golden West

THE isle that to Montalvo seemed
Half faery, half Elysian,
What time he wrote, and writing dreamed,
Las Sergas de Esplandian—

This, less all freaks of phantasy,
Less fables born to die away,
A dream-land made reality,
Our California is to-day.

All sorts of fruits it freely bears
In groves, thick laden as Christmas trees—
Oranges, lemons, apples, pears,
Figs, olives, peaches,—what you please.

Elsewhere it is as a garden-field
Of flowers, asparagus, beet, tomatoes;
Its very deserts, watered, yield
Alfalfa, melons, dates, potatoes.

"A land of corn and wine and oil"—
That is what Canaan was of old;
All this our Californian soil
Is; you may add its herds and gold.

For it's also a land of ranches, where
Cattle and horses are bred and fed;
It's also a land, where miners tear
The golden ore from its native bed.

But its best possession, its best asset,
Is the gold that ripens the fruits it bears—

The sunshine-gold, which all may get,
For it's lavished on all in equal shares.

These are those who call it "the Land of Heart's Desire"—a present Utopia;
Those, who have studied the ancient arts,
Might call it a Cornucopia.

Others have named it "the Golden Land"—
An El Dorado realized;
But its minerals bring less gold to hand
Than the fields its rivers have fertilized.

Call it whatever you will, it is
The pick of the earth—a paradise,
With certain eccentricities,
Of fruitful fields and smiling skies.

It isn't perfect; that's confest;
Eden itself with a snake was curst;
But, spite of rattlers, and of that pest,
Culex, of all lands it's the first.

A Great Franciscan

FRAY Junipero Serra, we,
Pondering your life-history,
Bare our heads to your memory.

Truly yours was a beautiful soul;
Truly yours was a lofty goal;
Truly your life was a perfect whole.

As a valiant soldier of Christ, you bore
The brunt of the battle that won this shore,
And we hail you its true Conquistador.

7

Si monumentum quaeritis,
Strangers, who visit this land, it is
All round about you, and it's just this:—

A land from heathen savageries
Redeemed by uplifting enterprise,
And made a fruitful paradise.

It's all an issue of what he wrought:
A realization of what he sought:
A fruit of the lessons he lived and taught.

For he was the first evangelist
Who brought to this land the Name of Christ—
Aye, and its first agriculturist.

He taught the natives the arts of peace;
He made their abominations cease;
He changed their deserts to tilths and leas.

Weary often he must have been
In body—aye, and in soul, I ween,
But his heart was great, and his faith serene.

And so the dreams of his youth came true;
For the Indians loved him—believed him too,
And did whatever he bade them do.

Won by his influence they became
Christians—disciples, whose lifelong aim
Was to live lives worthy of their new name.

And the mission stations he founded here,
Tho' ruined now, are a witness clear
Of his work, and make his memory dear.

Aye, and of sacrilege they indict
Those who afterwards did despite
To his order, as reckoning Might was Right.

Fray Junipero, loyal son
Of the Faith, I think, when your race was run,
You heard your Master's—"Well done: Well done."

San Bernardino

ABOUT us tower, a vision grand!
San Bernardino's peak and range;
Like giant battlements they stand
Changeless, yet monuments of change.

Snow-crowned, magnificent, serene,
They seem to meet and pierce the skies—
A sheltering rampart, and a screen
From the chill North's discourtesies.

It's thanks to them that the valley teems
With flowers and fruits, with corn and oil;
For the waters, caught from their springs and streams,
Make runnels to irrigate the soil.

What's in a name? Well, names there are,
The sound of which, as a trumpet-call,
Summons to fight for the right, and dare
All for its sake, tho' the heavens fall.

Aye, dare whatever a man may do,
Or bear—as erst the Apostle Paul,
de Xavier, Damien, dared, what tho'
To do what they did was to lost their all:

All, that is, that the world counts good—
Its ease, its pleasures, its luxuries;
All that our natural tempers would
Choose as a heritage and prize.

That was the way of the friars, who came
Hither a hundred years ago;
That was the way of the Saint, whose name
They set on the hills, and the vale below.

It's just the way of the Cross—the way
Of self-denial for others' sake—
The way, whatever the world may say,
All of us always are called to take.

So we dwell in the midst of memories,
As well as amid fair scenes of beauty—
Memories calling to high emprize,
And steadfast effort to do our duty.

San Bernardino, here's to your health;
Here's to your growth, and prosperity;
And we wish you, what is the truest wealth,
Courage and faith in your destiny.

San Buenaventura

VENTURA, they who lately clipt
Your name, and "San Buena" skipt,
Into a blunder surely slipt.

What's in a name? There's this—a claim
That they, who bear a noble name,
Should live lives worthy of its fame.

San Bernardino clipt, it's true,
Saves breath, but then it loses too
All inspiration as Berdoo.

Fortune may be or good or ill,
And, seeming good, may but fulfil
The mockeries of an evil will.

Success may be too dearly bought,
And fortune's gifts, if wrongly sought,
And wrongly won, are things of naught.

So "San Buena" seems to say,
Seek fortune in a righteous way,
As in Junipero's earthly day:

Who gave this place in days of yore
The name a Christian saint once bore,
To christen it for evermore.

Therefore, Venturans, don't forget
The prefix which of old was set
Before your name, and should be yet.

Let memories of your ancient name
Move you to make your every aim
Such as Junipero would acclaim.

Your Mission Churches stand to teach
What faith and duty mean, and preach
Christ unto all within their reach.

Long may they serve their ministry;
Long may the Cross, which stands on high,
Lesson you how to live and die.

A beacon for the ships at sea,
A beacon may it also be
Signalling souls—"Come unto ME."

Fair are your mountains, fair your sea;
Your fruits and flowers are fair to see;
Aye, all is fair as fair can be.

Let these reflections of God's grace
Move you to run your earthly race
As souls who long to see His Face.

Los Angeles

LOS Angeles, the angels' town!
What if an angel-host came down
To visit their own city?
What would their thoughts be? Thoughts of glad
Emotion, or reflections sad
Of sorrow and of pity?

Some things they surely would approve
As tokens of unselfish love
At work for human weal—
Your hospitals, your libraries,
Museum, parks, academies,
Your Churches' holy zeal.

But are there not, your bounds within,
Abodes of vice, foul haunts of sin,
Which shame your high estate?
Are there not crimes and infamies
Practised by brutes in human guise—
Things such as angels hate?

O Angelenos, let your aim
Be to live worthy of the name
The holy name—you bear;
So shall the angels help and guide
And keep you, whatsoe'er betide,
For ever in their care.

Ontario

(California.)

ONTARIO, that is, in English phrase,
"Great Lake"—thus Hiawatha's brotherhood, *
"They of the long lodge," named in ancient days,
The inland sea fed by Niagara's flood.

We, too, on whom Old Baldy's head looks down,
Have an Ontario; but what's our claim
To use this title for our little town?
Where's the "Great Lake" to justify the name?

The lake is here all right. Yes, but, as tho'
Set upside down by a gigantic hand,
It lies interned 'neath eighty feet or so
Of solid earth—gravel and clay and sand.

A sandy waste—that's what the valley seems;
But tap the subterranean lake, and lo!
The desert is as garden-land that teems
With crops of all the fruits and flowers that grow.

A miracle? Well, yes. Yet it's a thing
That human hands are working day by day;
They bore and pump, and then "Water is King",
And the waste places answer to its sway.

The hidden things of Nature are the gifts
She has for those who seek, who follow on
Until they find; such seeking souls she lifts
From truth to truth till the great Truth is won.

* The Iroquois.

El Camino Real

AS erst Saint Paul went forth to claim
The kingdoms of the world for Christ,
So Fra Junipero Serra came
To be this land's evangelist.

Never was truer Saint of all
The souls who that high name have won;
His was the courage of Saint Paul;
His was the spirit of Saint John.

He opened out the "King's Highway,"
The aim of his imaginings
Being that it should be for aye
A Highway of the King of kings:

No common road, tho' all might fare
Along it, but a road whereby
The messengers of peace might bear
Their message and their ministry.

From South to North the stations rose,
Which marked the track of that highway;
Each held aloft the Cross which shows
God's truth, God's love, God's conquering sway.

And Indians, won from their fierce creeds,
Learnt to obey the law of Christ;
Its Gospel satisfied their needs;
They tested it, and it sufficed.

So "El Camino Real" came
To be a royal road indeed;
It realized Junipero's aim,
And is of his eternal meed.

For, consecrate by him, it was
A very "Way of Holiness"—
A way by which freed souls might pass
Zionward thro' earth's wilderness.

A Fair Land

THIS is the fabled region where
The Hyperboreans lived out West—
An Eden, ever bright and fair,
Which great Apollo ruled and blest.
It is the garden, named of old
"The garden of the Hesperides,"
Whose golden Avalon foretold
Our groves of golden oranges.

It is the land men wont to call
Atlantis—an ideal Isle,
Whereon the sun at evenfall
Smiled, as he set, his farewell smile—
The land which, in a later day,
Padre Junipero Serra trod,
What time he built "The King's Highway,"
And consecrated it to God.

That, at which Earth's old-timers guessed,
Or gazed as in prophetic dream,
Before our eyes is manifest,
And bids us still "follow the Gleam"—
The Gleam, which flashes light thro' sin
And death, and gives to weary men
Foreglimpses of an age wherein
Earth shall be Paradise again.

Flora Californica

GO where you will in this fair land,
By canyon, chaparral belt, morass,
Up mountain trail, by ocean strand,
Wild flowers salute you as you pass.

Scattered about in gay parterres,
You see the flower that types our State:
That gilds rude wastes, once brown and bare:
That makes the gold of the Golden Gate.

The Spanish bayonet rears its head
With its bell-hung spike—a gallant sight;
The wild paint-brushes dash with red
A riot of yellow and blue and white.

Roses, primroses, pimpernels,
Heaths, lilies, violets, pinks galore,
Brooms, sunflowers, Canterbury bells—
You meet all these and a hundred more.

There are those that greet you from afar;
There are those that cluster about your feet;
But, far away or anear, they are
Friends, and the welcome of friends is sweet.

All lands are God's, but of all lands this
Seems likest Eden before the Fall;
And its wild flowers seem to stamp it His,
As with His own seal-manual.

Sursum Corda

ABOUT us stand, in brave array,
Hills, an encircling galaxy,
Save where they slope to make a way
For winds that blow from the Western sea.

Old Baldy, Cucamonga's height,
The long range of Saint Bernardine,
The mountains Santa Ana hight,
Jurupa's rugged peak and chine—

These are our Hills; within their reach
Our valley lies from end to end;
They compass us about, and each
Is to us monitor and friend.

They gather and hold the winter snow
In storage for the coming Spring;
From them the hidden waters flow
That make the valley laugh and sing.

Pointing aloft, and crowned, each morn
And eve, with a light ineffable:
Steadfast, tho' of convulsions born—
What are they but a parable?

Our thoughts are turned on crops and marts,
On cares and tasks that each day brings;
They say to us—"Lift up your hearts,
And set them on eternal things."

They speak of order, shaped and made
Sure by the very pangs of birth;
They bid us wait, nor be dismayed,
Tho' Armageddon shake the earth.

Hills of the Great Pacific Coast,
Ye have no voice, but there is a word
In you as the psalm of a mighty host
That praises, and bids us praise, the Lord.

Orange Day

IN CALIFORNIA'S heart there lies
A country that Pomona loves—
A paradise in a paradise—
The kite-shaped tract of orange groves.

Navels, Valencias, Tangerines,
Lemons, within that belt are found—
Aye, all the tribe of the Citrines—
And mark it as enchanted ground.

Eastward, as with wide-opened arms—
The arms of welcoming constraint—
Stands, as a portress to these charms,
The city of Siena's Saint.

And once a year, to manifest
To all the lands that lie back East
One glory of the Golden West,
She celebrates our Orange feast.

So too, amid the festal days,
Which California marks with white,
One bears the name, and tells the praise,
Of her best fruit, her heart's delight.

We keep this day in gratitude
For this fair fruit, this golden gift;
It's up to us to make this mood
An inspiration and uplift.

Northers

CHARLES KINGSLEY once upon a time
Welcomed in verse the North-East wind;
And yet one slew him in his prime,
Which surely wasn't very kind.

We too of California know
North-Easters—more's the pity o't;
And some of them are cold enow,
And some abominably hot.

In praise of them I'll write no ditty;
Or cold or hot they are a pest;
I'll only say it is a pity
They can't be instantly suppressed.

The only use that I can see
In them's to make us realize
That in this present order we
Can't have a perfect paradise.

A Famous Victory

(March 14, 1915.)

DOWN the Cajon Pass rushed, aslant
Our vale, a Norther on mischief bent;
To blast the young alfalfa plant,
And drift the sand, was its fell intent.

It raised sand-clouds that hid from sight
The hills and even the sunny sky;
And we thought of it as an evil sprite—
The breath of a demon's jealousy.

We watched its approach with a boding fear—
A fear akin to a grim dismay;
For the clouds came nearer and yet more near,
Till they weren't much more than a mile away.

'Twas 10 of the morn; thus far, that day,
A wind had blown from the Western sea—
A kindly Zephyr that seemed to say,
"My work is a work of charity."

For a little while, as if surprised
By the sudden rush of that desert wind—
As if it hadn't yet realized
The danger—it seemed of uncertain mind.

It was but taking breath; anon
It rose to the instant emergency;
And, like a giant refreshed, put on
Its strength, and clashed with the enemy.

It met the challenge, accepted it,
And flung it back, all undismayed;
It made the invader turn and quit—
Routed it; so the plague was stayed.

Thereafter, until the day was done,
It blew more softly, yet freshly still;
It seemed content, now the fight was won,
To reassure us of its good-will.

Our West winds call at Los Angeles,
On their way to us from across the sea;
So we reckoned the angels were in that day's
War, and gave thanks for their ministry.

Ruri

THERE is a charm in city-life—
Its business, its society;
Some even like its noise and strife;
But Oh! a country-life for me.

I've lived in cites, great and small;
I've wrought and ruffled it with the best;
Yes, but the issue of it all
Was simply this—longing for rest.

For rest, that is, from hustling—not
Surcease from work of heart and hand;
Such rest as this I think I've got
Now, for we've gone "back to the land."

We lack some luxuries, no doubt,
For shops and library are afar;
Our little market town's about
Five miles away, and we've no car.

Yes, but we also lack the roar—
The hurly-burly—of the town;
We cross our roads at leisure, nor
Fear lest road-hogs should knock us down.

We've lots to think of, lots to do;
In fact with jobs we're mostly throng;
Nor are we lonely, for, tho' few
Folk are about, they're coming along.

And more will come; this settlers' land
Claims thousands more, and it's good to know
That folk may come by the thousands, and
For all of them there'll be room enow.

We want no slugs, no "I-won't-work"s;
The land has no room for that crew—
No room or use for the man who shirks;
That sort may go to Timbuctoo.

Millions of fertile acres cry
For plough and labour to claim their wealth;
And the meed of a rancher's industry
Is not only crops, but peace and health.

It Was Evening and It Was Morning

I.

AFTER SUNDOWN

THE sun had set, but far away
The mountains held its radiancy;
And clouds above the horizon lay
Like islets in a silvern sea.

What seemed like rippling wavelets lapped
The fringes of each islet's coast;
What seemed like crowns of glory capped
The summits of the westernmost.

On the near isles one might descry,
Or think it, groves of stately trees,

And on the main the apparency
Of white-sailed boats that crossed the seas.

Here, growing chillness in the air,
And shadows of advancing night:
There, warmth and all things everywhere
Bathed in a flood of gracious light.

All an illusion? Well, maybe;
And yet one wonders if at times
A veil is lifted, and we see
Reflections of serener climes.

"The light that never was"—was this
A gleam of its ideal sheen:
A revelation of what is
Beyond the sun, beyond the seen?

The happy Islands of the Blest,
Atlantis of Egyptian fame,
The Hyperboreans' home of rest—
Were these a name, and but a name?

The gardens of the Hesperides,
Where Hera's golden apples grew,
Elysium, Avalon—were these
Dream-isles or visions of the true?

Ah, who shall say? Yet, tho' our eyes
Cannot discern its immanence,
Ever the world Eternal lies
About this world of time and sense.

As in a mirror now we see
The things that are, as mysteries;

And that fair vision, it may be,
Mirrored the things of Paradise.

It showed, as in a mystic scene,
A picture of night-conquering day,
Flashed, as it were, upon the screen,
And lit, by an Eternal ray.

II.

A SUNRISE.

Fog all around—a fog that hid
The very mountains from our sight:
That seemed to challenge and forbid
The morning's claim—"let there be light"—

So broke the day; it was as tho'
The powers of darkness and of light
Were battling, and one might not know
Which of the twain would win the fight.

Then, with a leap, or so it seemed,
Above the hill-tops rose the sun;
It chased the night; its radiance streamed
Thoro' the fog; the fight was won.

A glory lit the Eastern skies;
A splendour crowned the Eastern heights;
The valley seemed a paradise,
That woke to greet the Light of lights.

Thereafter came a golden day—
Sunshine and breezes from the West—
One of the days that make us say,
"'Tis California at her best."

Not all our morns are such as this;
Perhaps it came to lift our eyes
Beyond earth's glooms to Him, Who is
Lord of all suns and worlds and skies.

Achievement

A SETTLER'S THOUGHTS

I.

EARLY DAYS.

SHE'S coming to me
Across the sea—
The lass that I left in the Old Countree;
She's coming to bear
My name, and share
My life, my every joy and care.

For her dear sake
I came to make
A home in this waste of brush and brake;
And my task, I trow
Is accomplished now,
For my land's all watered and under plough.

The crops of a year
Have set me clear
To build a house that will please my dear;
And before my eyes
All-fertile lies,
Won from the desert, a paradise.

O bless the man
Out of whose brain-pan
Came the thought of wells Artesian,
For the water flows,
And each food-plant grows,
Till the wilderness blossoms as the rose.

She's coming to me
Across the sea—
The lass that I left in the Old Countree;
She's coming to bear
My name, and share
My life, my every joy and care.

II.

A YEAR LATER

She came to me
Across the sea—
The lass that I left in the Old Countree;
'Twas as I said:
So we got wed,
And are doing our best to go ahead.

It's half a year
Since I met my dear,
And she stepped ashore on New York pier;
Then right anon
We were made one,
And gee! how quickly the months have gone.

She's brought me luck,
And I shan't get stuck
If only I've half her grit and pluck;

While she is near
I cannot fear,
For her very presence is help and cheer.

There's work to do—
Uphill work too—
Or ever success comes into view;
But, if I'm not wrong,
We shan't be long
In making good, for we're going strong.

We've got a plan
To found a clan
Right here, as soon as ever we can;
And possibly
That thing may be,
For we're thinking now of a family.

III.

FORTY YEARS LATER

As I look back
On life's past track,
The moral seems to be—"Don't be slack.
Stand for the right,
And with all your might
Do each day's tasks before the night."

After a while
We made our pile,
Tho' at times the kettle was slow to bile.
'Twas toughish work,
But we didn't shirk,
And we never suffered our jobs to irk.

With a will we wrought;
With a will we sought
To do our duty as scamping naught.
Our simple creed—
Good work, good speed—
Cut out "mañana" from thought and deed.

We had a plan,
When we began
Our life's work here, to found a clan;
And that clan, I trow,
Is founded now,
If four generations are enow.

She's still with me,
Who crossed the sea,
As a lass, at my call, from the Old Countree.
Her hair is white,
But her smile's as bright
As ever, and she's my heart's delight.

Camp Followers

ROAD-RUNNERS three our camp frequent,
And eat up all our odds and ends;
They look on us, I guess, as sent
By Providence to be their friends.

Fragments of bread and cheese and fruit:
What we don't want of quail and duck:
Such things as these all seem to suit
Their taste; they take them as pot-luck.

One visitor we had complained
He'd left one night at his tent-door

A dozen eggs; next morn remained
Twelve empty egg-shells—nothing more.

Road-runners had surveyed the show;
Had found his eggs, and sucked the lot;
This aggravated him, and so
He finished their career with shot.

He'd not forgiven them; as for me,
Who have no new-laid eggs at stake,
Birds that eat rattlesnakes are free
To take whatever they can take.

They're having carousals now around
The chair whereon I sit and smoke;
One's not two yards away; he's found
I'm not an inimical bloke.

He lifts and lowers his nodding crest;
His tail wags ceaselessly; I think
He's really doing his very best
To perpetrate a friendly wink.

Ah! in a moment he has gone;
He has a feud, which nought can staunch,
With passing motor-cars, and one
Is hurrying up toward the ranch.

An Imp

THE little chipmunk
Is full of spunk,
And it takes a lot to skeer him;
Yet he's also wary,
And somewhat chary
Of letting you get too near him.

But all the same,
He soon gets tame,
Especially if you feed him;
He'll sit on your foot,
As on a tree-root,
Or stump, if you don't stampede him.

It isn't funk
When he makes a bunk,
But he takes no needless chances;
He's pert and spry,
Or still and shy,
According to circumstances.

He burrows a hole—
This wily soul—
In the ground, and there takes shelter;
Or, if need be,
Streaks up a tree
With his family, helter-skelter.

He sits on his heels
To take his meals,
And his jaws go snicker-snicker,
With the energy
And velocity
Of a Waterbury ticker.

Locusts he'll eat,
But he's mighty sweet
On corn, new-sown or reapit;
And he'll loot your larder,
If you've no warder,
In the shape of a cat, to keep it.

He munches apples;
With nuts he grapples;
Likes carrots and beans and berries;
His appetite
Is cosmopolite,
But he's extra fond of cherries.

His cheeks bulge out
Till they're just about
As tight as he well can pack 'em;
Then off to his holt
He makes a bolt,
To digest his supplies, or stack 'em.

An inch away
From his hole one day
I laid a rind of bacon;
He sat on a chunk
Of wood, and wunk
At me, if I'm not mistaken.

As soon as I'd gone
To my chair, he was on
The spot, to inspect this treasure;
He nibbled a bit,
And it seemed to fit;
So he finished it at his leisure.

Would fish food vary
His dietary—
I wondered, and thought I'd try it;
The head of a trout
Resolved my doubt,
For he passed disdainful by it.

For stale refuse
He has no use—
This clean-souled little rodent;
Where a rat would thrive
He couldn't live,
And, for that matter, wouldn't.

Curled up in his keep,
He spends in sleep
The winter; but when spring's beauties
Peeps forth, he awakes.
And promptly takes
Up again his round of duties.

The litle chipmunk
Is never punk:
Never a feckless slacker;
He works for his food,
Aye, and makes good,
As nut-storer, and nut-cracker.

Big Bear Lake

IN summer time the summer heat
Sends lots of townsfolk to the sea;
Perhaps the Beaches draw the élite,
But Big Bear Lake's the place for me.

It's no haunt nowadays—this spot,
Despite its soubriquet, of bears;
But bears' society is not
A thing for which one greatly cares.

Big trout in the big lake abound,
And freely take fat hellgrammites;
Big mountain ranges stand around,
And lift to heaven their pine-clad heights.

As for society, you meet
By daylight feathered friends galore,
And chipmunks gather round your feet,
If you but feed them, by the score.

Then in the evening as you sit
Beside your camp-fire—by the way,
Your camp-fire-place must be a pit—
Neighbours come round and make things gay.

They tell you tales of many things;
Then, to the Ukulele's chords,
Some sweet-voiced singer softly sings
Songs in Hawaii's native words.

O Big Bear Lake's the place for me,
Depressed by toil and heat; its gifts
Are rest, cool airs, soft minstrelsy,
Sport, smiling faces—all uplifts.

Trails

THEY are not what we'd like to see—
Your roads, O California;
Tho' perfect roads exist, maybe,
Only within Utopia.

Yours, like the curate's egg, in parts
Are excellent—good, till a reach
Occurs of tracks which break our hearts,
Or move thoughts far too deep for speech.

"No passing:" "Road up for repair:"
"Road passable but dangerous"—
Such legends face us, and we fare
By by-ways worse than villainous.

Deep drifts of sand that clog our path:
Chuck-holes that jolt us into fits:
Wash-outs left wash-outs, to our wrath:—
These things knock patience into bits.

One trail alone there is whereof
I never heard a word of blame,
A word of scorn; no scoffers scoff
At it, tho' some smile at its name,

Walking thro' "Pine Crest" grounds one day,
I saw a sign that made me quail;
"Danger: Keep out"—it seemed to say,
For thus it ran—"The Spinsters' Trail."

"This is no place for me, I guess,"
Was my first thought, "who am a man."
I thought of Tennyson's Princess,
And from those precincts all but ran.

But is that alley consecrate
To spinsterhood? Is its intent
That spinsters here should congregate,
Nor fear the approach of any gent?

It seemed to me that, whensoe'er,
Looking along that mystic trail,
I glimpsed a couple strolling there,
One of the twain was always male.

O Spinsters, spinning webs for swains,
In perilous paths you see no harm;
Rocks, sand-banks, pit-holes are but gains,
If you can clasp a man's strong arm.

O Spinsters' Trail, queen of love-lanes,
Your sign-post lacks some words, I fear;
Should it not add—"No hope remains
For bachelors who enter here"?

Things Old and New

"OLD friends, old books, old wines," we say,
"For us"—'tis a good saying too;
Old friends are best; new books give way
To old; old wine surpasses new.

Here you may have old friends, and here
Find in our public libraries
Books of all ages; yes, but where
Are wines of ancient vintages?

Our climate is as fair and fine
As Portugal's—aye, every whit;
We have the grapes that yield her wine,
And make it. But what's done with it?

Shades of departed connoisseurs,
Forgive the tale I must unfold;
Our Californian bons viveurs
Drink our Port wine a fortnight old.

Forbidden Fruit

WHAT was the fruit, the fateful fruit,
That brought in death and pain and teen—
Quince, apple, plum? The question's moot,
Save that it wasn't a Citrine.

It's true that some lay all the blame
On shaddocks; that's an idle guess.
All Citrines, worthy of the name,
Are charged with thoughts of happiness.

O Orange blossoms, wedding peals
Ring from you, tho' your bells are mute;
O Orange pomes, unless one steals,
Thank Heaven! you're not forbidden fruit.

Titular Honours

TITLES, bar titles borne by peers,
In this new land are rife—
Some of them echoes of the years,
I reckon, of civic strife.

Even of peerage-titles there
Is one, if I'm not mistook,
You'll hear if, when you're at work, you wear
A collar, and that is "Dook."

Thus I've been dubbed such names as these—
Professor, Colonel, Cap.,
Doc., Major, Judge, and, if you please,
Uncle—that means "Old Chap."

Titles of dignity I once
Disclaimed; 'twas idle chatter;
And so, since nobody called me "Dunce,"
I reckoned it didn't matter.

For, since expostulation just
Provoked a gentle smile,
Dumb acquiescence seemed the best;
Protests were not worth while.

I was, I said, no son of Mars,
And so was not to blame
If I showed blank ignorance of all wars,
I was "Colonel" all the same.

I mentioned that I'd no nephews or
Nieces, and must confess
The title was strange to me therefore.
I was "Uncle" none the less.

Each appellation was, I guess,
A sort of courtesy;
And, since it made for friendliness,
That was enough for me.

I'm not yet General; that's to be
Perhaps, and who knows what more?
There may be yet in store for me
The title of Senator.

I may arrive at the dignity,
Fate willing, of Commodore;
But I thankfully add that certainly
I shan't be yclept "Guvnor."

ENVOY

THIS little ditty is not, of course,
A tale of The Upper Ten;
It speaks of those we call, by force
Of habit, just working men.

I'm talking of boys with whom I've camped
By river and sea and lake:
Of boys with whom I've trailed and tramped
Thro' swamp and brush and brake.

Hail! comrades all, who gave me names
Of honour in days past: Hail!
To the honours I disavow all claims,
But here's to you all—Wassail!

In the Wilderness

THRO' the Mohave desert I
Wandered, and feared I'd gone astray;
Until at last my searching eye
Espied three sign-boards far away.

I banished fears, hitched up my pants,
And blessed some Good Samaritan;
Amalie Autolubricants
Soon changed my blessing to a ban.

I tried the next; another sell
Mocked me, and stirred my soul to rage;
The Fireproof Baltimore Hotel,
Los Angeles, claimed patronage.

One chance remained; my eager gaze
Sought the third board; hope perished there;
The Goodrich Tires, always all ways,
Just tired me out, and bred despair.

Then, as I fanned my fevered brow,
I wished all mischiefs to the gents
Who reared those boosting signs; and now
I never read advertisements.

Never, O never, will I try
A Goodrich tire, or patronize
The Baltimore Hotel, or buy
Aught the Amalie Store supplies.

Illogical? Well yes, maybe;
I will forgive them by and by,
When sign-marks of topography
Map out the land, and show its lie.

Some Dawg

WE have a dog; we call him Bobs;
Named after him of Indian fame;
He gives himself a lot of jobs;
In fact he plays the chore-dog's game.

What is his breed? Well, what you please,
For what it is I couldn't state.
Perhaps it's best to say that he's
Cosmopolite or conglomerate.

Some of his acts transgress the laws
Of comme il faut—what ought to be—
As when he jumps with dirty paws
On us in romping slobbering glee.

He chased the chickens, till he found
Such acts meant an unpleasant row;
He used to make holes in the ground
Sacred to flowers. He's shut out now.

He barks, and wakes us up, at night
Now and again; and that, no doubt,
Annoys us; yes, but there he's right;
It means coyotes are about.

Ground squirrels, flooded out, he'll catch;
Gophers, let loose from traps, he'll kill;
For all small varmints he's a match;
But one thing baffles all his skill.

When Uncle takes his hoe, and goes
To stub up weeds, and potter round,
Bobs follows him, and, I suppose,
Reckons himself a prize greyhound.

For quite a while you hear no sound;
Then suddenly Bob's little song
Starts, yelp on yelp, for he has found
His quarry, and so is giving tongue.

The old jack-rabbit goes three yards
For his one yard; Bobs doesn't care;
He always thinks it's on the cards
He'll catch that wretched halfbred hare.

So ventre à terre he yelps and runs
Till the jack-rabbit's off the ranch;
Then he comes back, as knowing the fun's
Over, and drinks to a revanche.

This is his grand ambition; he
Lives to see its high hope fulfilled;
I think his very dreams must be
Of old jack-rabbits coursed and killed.

As soon as ever we can, we will
Give the old blithering ass away—
That's what we say; but Bobs is still
Here, and I think he's come to stay.

Billy

WE'VE got a second dog now, name of Billy;
Him, when he came, Bobs deemed superfluous,
And sought to shift, only to be knocked silly
In the immediately resultant fuss.

It took three fights at least to end that row,
For Bobs hates interference with his jobs,
And reckons that he can run the entire show;
But Billy's half as big again as Bobs.

What is his breed? Ah, we can meet that query;
Billy's a thoroughbred Dalmatian,
A scion of noble stock; in fact a very
Fine specimen of that distinguished clan.

Que diable va-t-il faire dans cette galère?
Ah well, as having spent years upon the land,
When taken to town, he couldn't settle there;
He found town-life a thing he couldn't stand.

He scorned the tame rôle of a carriage-dog;
The canines that he met were not his sort;

Along the streets he didn't care to jog;
He wanted space to roam in, freedom, sport.

So he was brought to us; here all things are
According to his mind; he wanders free
About the ranch, and finds in constant war
Against ground-squirrels a constant ecstasy.

He sees a squirrel sitting by its hole;
Points, with his tail erect alas! but straight;
Then, as a wave of passion floods his soul,
Makes his onrush, and starts to excavate.

His head first sinks from sight; then, spasm by spasm,
'Mid clouds of sand, his body follows suit;
His tail-tip disappears; result, a chasm—
A mighty chasm—but nary game as loot.

Yet, all the same, he's helped to clear the ground
About the house of these banditti, and,
As for the rest, we don't, as we look round,
Begrudge them their small interest in the land.

That and guard's duty are his industry;
Thus are his hunting instincts satisfied;
Thus, as joint-guardian of the farmery,
He takes his place as comrade at our side.

The Golden Rule

"THINK of the other fellow"—'tis
A legend that you read
Set up by mountain-streams, and this
Is Royal Law indeed.

Foul not the mountain-becks that run
To slake the traveller's thirst;
That were an act, even if done
Of thoughtlesness, accurst.

Taint not the streams of life; that sin
Hurts innocents, and he,
Who sins it, earns a scorn akin
To Herod's infamy.

Who drops lit matches in the brush,
Careless what may betide,
May start a flame whose furious rush
Will sweep the mountain-side.

Guard speech; words dropped in idleness
May rouse a blaze of ire;
May make a mischief past redress;
For tongues are as a fire.

"Do unto others as you would
That they should do to you"—
Meet needs, set right what's wrong, do good—
That's Law and Gospel too.

"Think of the other fellow"—that
In homely language is
The selfsame rule, and tell me what
Notice could better this.

California

Sung at the National Orange Show, San Bernardino

OF all the countries, which romance
Has pictured as earth's hope and pride,
Three by acclaim—Spain, England, France—
Stand in the front rank, side by side.
England the merry, France the fair,
Spain, the adventurous knightly land—
These fill the picture; yes, but where
Does sunny California stand?

Refrain.

O land of fruits and flowers:
O land, which nature dowers
With all her wealth of loveliness, with all her braveries:
We sound abroad thy praise
With music and with lays,
Which show thee, what thou surely art, an earthly paradise.

They knew her not—the minstrel-men,
Who, in the mid-age of our earth,
Chaunted their rhapsodies; for then
She had not come to her full birth.
But as for mirth—what gramarye
Her sunshine gladness could enhance?
Is she not fair as fair can be?
Is she not home of true romance?

Refrain.

What shall we call her? Arcady?
The Country of the Golden Gate?
The Land, above all lands that be,
Of Heart's Desire? The Golden State?
No matter. Titles such as these
All shadow forth her grace and fame;
Yet count that, call her what you please,
What spells romance best spells her name.
Refrain.

Romance? Aye, realized romance:
Fulfilments of hope's prophecies:
Ideals, thro' the clairvoyance
Of one seer, made realities—
That is the story of our land;
That is our goodly heritage;
Pray Heaven that, what great Serra planned,
We may work out from age to age.
Refrain.

Apples of Gold

Sung at the National Orange Show, San Bernardino

IN days of old, so ran the tale,
Far out at sea, toward the West,
Lay isles, untouched by frost or gale,
Fair as the Islands of the Blest.
Upon these isles grew apple trees,
Whose fruit was golden to the eye,
Safeguarded by the Hesperides,
And a grim dragon, couched anigh.
Refrain.

O golden apples of the past,
What were ye but a dim forecast
Of golden oranges?
What were those isles but prophecies
Of California's sunny skies,
And sunlit groves and leas?

Whatever crops those islands bare
On Californian soil are grown;
Her citrus-fruits will stand compare
With that famed fruit, and hold their own.
And California bears them, not
To please one jealous owner's sight,
But for the world to use, and what
She seeks is the whole world's delight.

Refrain.

No cruel dragon has its lair
Among her groves, to scare or slay;
Not even rattlesnakes lurk where
Her orange-trees make their display.
Her nymphs, like the Hesperides,
Are daughters of the golden West.
But what they guard is not her trees,
But hearts of those they love the best.

Refrain.

Eschscholtzia

WHAT time the countries of the earth
Made choice of flowers to typify
Their idiosyncrasies—as mirth,
Peace, purity, fertility:

Then England claimed the wilding rose,
Spain the pomegranate, France the white
Lily; so California chose
The golden flame-flower as her right.

Refrain.

O yellow Eschscholtzia
Of California,
You're a fit flower-emblem of the State your presence beautifies;
For, brightest of all the poppies,
The colour you wear just copies
The sunshine glory which makes our land an earthly paradise.

She has her wilding roses too:
Pomegranates, lilies, everywhere:
Aye, flowers of every form and hue,
Whose fragrant breath perfumes the air.
The flame-flower's scent is not its pride;
Its swift appeal is to our sight;
It clothes the barren mountain-side,
And wastes are gardens of delight.

Refrain.

There are those who call it by other names—
As "Copa d'Oro," the cup of gold;
But we name it best as the flower that flames
O'er moor and desert, on cliff and wold.
There are other poppies, and all are bright,
All gay, with wonderful tints and sheen—
Rose-coloured, scarlet, pearly-white—
But the golden poppy's the poppy-queen.

Refrain.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Out West

"OUT WEST" they say. All right; but out of what?
Out of what's called "High Life?" Way out beyond
The gay world's pomps and pleasures and what not:
The Vanity Fair of fashion: the beau monde?

Well, yes; we are outsiders, more or less,
Thus far; with us Dame Fashion's not a-top;
That doesn't trouble us a lot, I guess;
We'd sooner have a cow-boy than a fop.

But, all the same, in these far distant parts
We're fairly civilized upon the whole;
We have our share, I think, of generous hearts—
Of souls who look past dollars for their goal.

We're not illiterates; if folk are short
Of books, that want is even now supplied.
The Arts and Sciences hold constant Court
Among us, and are honoured far and wide.

'The feast of reason and the flow of soul"
Enter our social feasts, and give them zest;
Our sympathies reach out from pole to pole;
We're not parochial sectaries "Out West."

Fakers there are among us, grafters too—
Tricksters, who batten on their brethren's needs—
Yes, but they are not of us—are not true
Sons of the race that the West Country breeds.

And as for climate, as for fruits and flowers—
Well, of these things we're not inclined to boast;
But when the States "Back East" can better ours,
Then we'll make tracks for the Atlantic coast.

Meantime we've lots to think of and to do;
Our work's cut out for us from day to day;
We have our play times, and we use them too;
In short we're here, and here we mean to stay.

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